

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 611

All the teachers and students filled the school field. Only when there were special events would everyone be gathered together.

This time, they were called together due to a student's "mistake."

Despite how tenacious her character was, Sang Yu couldn't calm herself when she saw all the students staring at her coldly. She couldn't help but clench her fist, crumpling the piece of paper in her hands.

The teacher turned around, gave her a look, and sighed. "You must have offended someone. Or else something as old as this wouldn't have been brought back up from the past."

However, Sang Yu couldn't think of who she offended and had tried to set her up. Other than Lu Wanwan, who openly bullied her, she couldn't think of anyone else.

After pondering about it further, she surmised that Lu Wanwan didn't have sufficient influence to execute something like that. After all, only the principal could make this sort of decision. Besides, she wasn't that influential.

In that case, who else can it be?

She just didn't know.

"Even I can't help you." Her teacher sympathized with her. "Just head to the front."

Sang Yu knew that since someone was out to get her, there was nothing much the teacher could do.

She felt wronged and couldn't control her trembling body. However, she understood her priorities. If she didn't do it, she might be suspended from the university. She could not let that happen as that was her only avenue in making it in life. No matter what, she had to graduate on time.

Hence, despite the humiliation, she knew she had to endure.

After walking to the front, she could hear whispers among the students. Many of them knew her from the incident last time. Despite it being in the past, she had made an impression on them. This time, she would become infamous in school.

At that moment, one of the teachers said, "Let's start."

The students fell silent instantly as they waited for her to reflect on her own behavior.

Sang Yu resented the smirks and nosy expressions of her fellow students. Despite being innocent, she still had to apologize in front of everyone for something she didn't do.

Hence, she could barely contain her emotions.

After taking a few deep breaths, she finally lifted the apology letter that she had written. With sweaty palms and a pale face, she meekly spoke into the mic, "My Apology."

"Dear teachers and fellow students, today I have written a letter of apology with my heart filled with remorse. I want to apologize for my inappropriate behavior at the school entrance. I also want you to know that I realize my mistake and will endeavor not to repeat it..."

Her voice increasingly trembled as she read out the letter. Towards the end, it had become hoarse.

“Therefore, I feel the need to apologize to the teachers and to let myself reflect on my mistake...”

“What is going on?” Some of the police officers who came with Shen Peichuan were dumbfounded.

Can the university still humiliate someone like that in front of all the teachers and students?

Another colleague added, “This student has got guts.”

As Shen Peichuan’s eyes flashed with a tinge of emotion, he whispered to one of them beside him, “Take them there.”

The reason he was here today was due to Sang Yu’s mother. However, he didn’t have to be here as someone else was responsible for informing the next-of-kin. Nevertheless, since he knew it was related to Sang Yu, he decided to tag along. Little did he expect...

Lifting his gaze to look ahead, he saw a slim girl with a simple ponytail, and her eyes were lowered. Despite not being able to see her expression clearly, he knew from her posture that she was a tenacious girl. Even under such circumstances, she was standing proudly in defiance.

Meanwhile, the police officers went to the front to speak to the teachers. Usually, if something happened to the prisoners, they would just give the prisoner’s family a call.

However, since this was a death in prison, they had to notify the deceased’s next-of-kin properly.

The coroner had completed the autopsy and confirmed that she died due to sickness.

Even if it wasn’t their responsibility, they still had to notify the deceased’s family.

When the group of uniform officers approached, it only served to pique the curiosity of everyone present. However, the officers' gaze did not stray as they walked up to the teachers with an authoritative swagger. "We're from the police department. May I know if a freshman named Sang Yu is here?"

Sang Yu's teacher stood up and looked at them with unease. "You..."

One of the students pointed at Sang Yu, "She's the one."

The officers turned around and saw the girl who was reading out the apology letter in front of everyone. They asked, "Are you Sang Yu?"

Sang Yu stared back at them and replied, "Yes, I am."

Her teacher rushed forward and stood between Sang Yu and the officers. She inquired, "What did she do wrong? Can it be a mistake? Actually, she is a good student..."

"No, she didn't do anything wrong. We just wanted to speak with her for a moment."

Only then did the teacher heave a sigh of relief. She was worried that Sang Yu's future would be destroyed.

After all, any case that involved the police might leave her a criminal record.

"Come with us," he instructed sternly.

Despite not knowing what was going on and feeling apprehensive, Sang Yu wasn't cowed. "Alright, I'll come with you."

Looking at her teacher's worried face, she put on a brave smile. "Don't worry. I'll be fine."

She knew that she didn't do anything wrong. Besides, the officers said that they had business with her. Perhaps they just needed her help for some information.

However, her teacher wasn't as optimistic as she was. She knew someone was out to get Sang Yu still. Hence, she couldn't help but worry when she saw the arrival of the police.

"Let's go."

While the officers escorted Sang Yu away in front of everyone, they explained to them the reason for doing so. This is so that unpleasant rumors could be prevented from surfacing due to their actions.

"She didn't do anything wrong. We just need her help in one of our cases."

With that, they left with Sang Yu.

Along the journey, Sang Yu felt a sense of dread. As she didn't encounter anything out of the ordinary recently, she asked the officers once they were out of the school, "Why are you looking for me?"

One of them replied, "We'll talk back at the station."

Sang Yu had no choice but to endure her unease and follow them into the car. The moment the car door opened, she saw Shen Peichuan inside.

"Why are you..."

"Get in." Shen Peichuan moved further in and made space for her.

After getting in and closing the door, Sang Yu asked, "Do you know what they want with me?"

Shen Peichuan ignored her question and asked, "Wasn't the matter from last time resolved? Why are you apologizing in front of all the students and teachers?"

Sang Yu lowered her gaze and replied plainly, "It's nothing, really."

She didn't want to burden Shen Peichuan any further.

Frowning, Shen Peichuan knew she wasn't telling the truth. He stared at her and asked, "Don't you trust me?"

Sang Yu shook her head immediately, "No, why wouldn't I trust you? Last time, I was the one who caused you trouble, and I feel sorry for it. I wouldn't want to burden you further."

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Shen Peichuan pursed his lips and didn't know how to respond. Despite her young age, she was kind and very thoughtful. It was just that fate had been cruel to her.

Sang Yu tilted her head and looked at him, "Why are you upset?"

She could sense that he was disturbed. This was the first time she saw such an expression after getting to know him.

Yet, Shen Peichuan didn't say anything.

After settling into her seat, Sang Yu didn't ask him anything further. She thought to herself that he was also human and must have his own problems too. It would be rude of her to babble away incessantly.

Perhaps he wants some peace.

Along the way, they remained silent. As a matter of fact, Shen Peichuan was struggling to think of a way to break the news about her mother to her. On the other hand, Sang Yu assumed something else was weighing on his mind.

When they arrived at the police station, Shen Peichuan had his men go ahead while he spoke to Sang Yu in private.

They alighted from the car, leaving Shen Peichuan and Sang Yu inside.

"What did you want to tell me?" Sang Yu felt something was amiss as Shen Peichuan usually wasn't this undecided.

He looks really unhappy today. Is something bothering him? Suddenly an idea flashed across her mind.

“Mr. Shen?” Sang Yu laughed. She tried to cheer him up by teasing him. “You’re already so old. Why are you acting young by being emotional?”

Shen Peichuan looked up at her. *She grew up under such unfortunate circumstances and yet didn’t give up. Moreover, she didn’t lose the zest for life too. In fact, she studies hard and gets herself into a good university. At the same time, she took care of her mother, who was serving her sentence.*

He reached out to stroke her on her head. There wasn’t any particular meaning behind it. He just wanted to console her as he sympathized with her circumstances.

Stunned, Sang Yu’s body froze. She never expected him to touch her.

After all, he was someone principled and was always conservative when it came to the opposite gender.

Why would he...

“Are...” Sang Yu stuttered, “Are you alright?”

“Your mother, she...”

“What about her?” Sang Yu blinked. Despite being in prison, her mother was in good health. *What could happen to her?*

Therefore, Sang Yu wasn’t prepared for the worst.

“Why aren’t you saying anything? Does she want to see me? I haven’t seen her in the last few days and didn’t hear anything about her sentence being shortened. So what’s going on?” Sang Yu pressed on with her questions.

“She fell sick suddenly... and had passed on.”

Sang Yu’s face turned ashen the very next instant. She couldn’t believe her ears and felt as if she were struck by lightning. And after that, it felt like someone had splashed her with a bucket of ice water, causing her whole body to feel numb. She looked at him bewildered. “Wh-wh-what did you say?”

Shen Peichuan repeated himself, “Your mom has passed away.”

“You’re lying!” she interrupted him abruptly. “I just saw her a few days ago, and she was still doing fine. How is it possible that she’s dead?”

This isn’t real. Am I dreaming?

Yes, it has to be a dream. My mom must be missing me, so she’s telling me through my dream to visit her.

That has to be it.

“I’ll visit her tomorrow.” She repeated those words incessantly. While doing so, she opened the car door and got down. Shen Peichuan quickly followed and grabbed her by the arm. “You have to calm down.”

“How could I possibly do that?” Her mom was the only one she had left. And he had just told her she lost her last remaining family member.

There was no way she could accept it.

“You’re lying to me, right?” Her eyes were swollen red while her limbs were all trembling, not knowing where to grasp for support.

Shen Peichuan replied coldly, “No, I’m not lying. It’s true.”

Sang Yu burst into tears and then laughed before wailing again, just like a madwoman.

“Calm down.” Not knowing how to console her, Shen Peichuan raised his voice so that she could hear him.

Despite how tenacious Sang Yu was, she still emotionally depended on her mother a lot. Now, she had become an orphan as her closest family had left her.

“I want to see her.” Her voice was completely hoarse.

Shen Peichuan looked at her in concern, “Will you be alright?”

She nodded with conviction.

“Fine, I’ll take you there.” Shen Peichuan looked at her as he spoke. “Do you need me to support you?”

Sang Yu shook her head.

Then Shen Peichuan walked ahead and escorted her in. Along the way, he explained, “It was very sudden. She passed before medical help even arrived. The coroner has completed his report, and I’ll take you there later. Someone professional will also explain everything to you.”

Sang Yu didn’t say a word as she followed him in.

As Shen Peichuan turned around, he could see that she wasn’t in the mood to listen to anything he said. Hence, he remained silent throughout. When they arrived, Sang Yu requested, “I want to go in alone. Just tell me where she is.”

“Number 203, you will find her name there,” Shen Peichuan replied. No matter how difficult it was, she still had to see her mother alone.

“I got it.” Just as she spoke, Sang Yu walked through the corridor and pushed open the massive swing doors. It caused a cold draft to gush out just like it was winter. Nevertheless, she didn’t feel it at all. It wasn’t her body that felt cold; it was her heart that was frozen.

In a short moment, she arrived at number 203 and saw the name on top of it. When she reached out to pull open the locker, she suddenly paused. At that moment, she lost the courage to do it and to see her mother’s face.

By avoiding it, she could still tell herself it was all a misunderstanding. But once she saw it for herself, the illusion would be over.

“Mom, you won’t abandon me, will you? You won’t have the heart to leave me alone in this world, right? I know you won’t do it. You even endured Dad’s beatings just for my sake. How can you leave just like that? How can you bear to leave me alone? It’s all not real. It can’t be! Someone must be playing a prank on me. That must be it.” The moment she finished, she pulled open the locker where the body was stored. Along with the mist that escaped, a familiar face emerged.

Despite it looking pale, Sang Yu recognized her easily.

At that moment, all her hopes and dreams were crushed that instantly. Reality had struck as her only family had abandoned her.

Suddenly, she dropped to her knees and began to wail, “Mom...”

Shen Peichuan could even hear her cries from outside. Sighing, he leaned against the wall and didn’t enter so as not to disturb.

“She went in alone?” One of his subordinates asked as he approached.

Shen Peichuan grunted in acknowledgment.

“That girl is really brave to enter a morgue like that,” the man added.

“She probably didn’t have the time to think about that,” Shen Peichuan replied.

Given how devastated she was, that was probably the last thing on her mind.

After some thought, the man agreed. “That’s true.”

Leaning against the wall, he continued, “She really is pitiful.”

Instead of answering, Shen Peichuan asked, “Do you have a cigarette?”

The man nodded and slipped one out from the packet of cigarettes in his pocket. After that, he flipped out his lighter and offered Shen Peichuan a light.

The morgue was both secluded and quiet. Both of them smoked while standing quietly by the corridor.

“What’s your relationship with her? Are you really a couple? I’d never have guessed,” the man suddenly remarked.

Everyone who worked with him understood his character. Despite how principled he was, his thinking was still old-fashioned.

Shen Peichuan looked up and asked, “Why is that so?”

“You look like someone who’d probably prefer a person your own age because you will worry about what others may say if you’re going out with someone younger. We’ve been working together for such a long time that I know you inside out,” As he spoke, the man put his arm around Shen Peichuan’s shoulder. “Times are different now, so don’t be too old-fashioned. Age is no longer an issue anymore. Many older men are in a relationship with younger women. Furthermore, you’re not that old. At most, you’re just older than her by about ten years, which is really nothing...”

“Why are you being nosy?” Shen Peichuan cut him off abruptly. “She just lost her family, and you’re talking to me about this. Do you think it’s appropriate?”

Realizing his mistake, the man cleared his throat to hide his awkwardness. “I’m sorry. I realize I still have something to take care of, so I’ll take my leave first.”

Just when he was leaving, the cries from inside stopped. He turned around to look at Shen Peichuan, “Why is it quiet now?”

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Both men exchanged glances and rushed in, thinking that she might have done something impulsive. Inside, they found her unconscious on the ground.

Shen Peichuan did a quick check on her and was relieved to find that she didn't try to commit suicide. Instead, she had fainted from the emotional turmoil.

As he carried her up and walked out, he turned towards his colleague and instructed, "I'm taking her to the hospital. Call me if there's anything at the station."

The man grunted in acknowledgment.

After carrying her out of the police station, he placed her in the backseat of his car. Then, he got into the driver's seat and drove.

Along the way, Sang Yu woke up and noticed where she was. In a weak and broken voice, she asked, "Where are you taking me?"

Sang Yu turned around and replied, "To the hospital."

"I'm fine. I don't need to go there." She tried to support herself to sit up. Stopping the car by the side, Shen Peichuan turned around and looked at her. He asked, "Where would you like to go then?"

Sang Yu was caught by surprise. Other than her university, she had nowhere else to go. Suddenly, she realized that she had nothing left. Despite her best efforts at living her life, life was just not making it any easier for her.

Even the last member of her family was taken away.

“I think I must have been an evil person in my last life and hurt a lot of people. Hence, in this life, karma is punishing me for it. Or else, why would God be so cruel to me?” she mumbled as tears streaked down her cheeks.

Shen Peichuan wasn't good at consoling. “Don't think that way.”

Hugging her knees, Sang Yu curled into a ball. “If that wasn't the case, then tell me, why would God treat me this way?”

“There are still a lot of people who have it worse than you. You got yourself into a good university and will have a bright future,” Shen Peichuan comforted her.

Staring blankly into space, Sang Yu snorted. “But that doesn't mean anything anymore. The reason I wanted a good job after I graduate was so that I can earn a lot. With the money, I can provide my mom a good life. But now? Who am I to provide for?”

Shen Peichuan pursed his lips.

It's natural to feel lonely when one is alone. However, one must strive hard to live.

We only have one life. No matter what, we cannot give up.

“If you have no place to go, I'll take you to my place. I'll bring you back here once you have calmed down.” Shen Peichuan was worried that she might do something rash. Hence, it was better for him to bring her home. At least he could watch over her and prevent anything untoward from happening.

“I don't want to,” Sang Yu refused him because she only wanted to be alone. The next moment, she opened the car door and got down.

Shen Peichuan followed, “Where are you going?”

“I want to be alone, so don’t follow me.” Sang Yu wanted to leave quickly as she was worried Shen Peichuan would stop her. However, she didn’t see where she was going and missed a step. In a blink of an eye, Shen Peichuan grabbed her arm just when she was about to fall. Before he could say anything, the phone in his pocket rang.

He took out his phone and answered. It was Captain Song who called and wanted to see him.

He glanced at Sang Yu and said, “I just went out...”

“Turn around and head back here right now.” Captain Song’s voice was resolute.

Shen Peichuan had no choice but to return. “I’ll be there in ten minutes.”

A grunt was heard at the other end of the line before the call ended. Worried about what would happen to Sang Yu if she were alone, he decided to bring her along. “Let go back to the station for the time being, and we’ll leave later.”

“I’m not going,” Sang Yu refused him again.

Shen Peichuan patiently asked her, “Where are you heading to?”

He was met with silence because she really didn’t have anywhere else to go.

Ignoring her refusal, Shen Peichuan pulled her into the car by force and quickly locked the doors. “It’s too dangerous for you to be alone outside. Since we’re friends, I can’t leave you like that.”

With that, he started the car’s engine.

Meanwhile, Sang Yu curled up in the backseat quietly without further protest.

When Shen Peichuan saw that she wasn't protesting, he stepped on the accelerator and drove away.

Back at the station, he arranged for Sang Yu to be in his office and poured her a glass of water. "Wait here for me."

Sang Yu didn't respond. All she did was stare listlessly into space, just like a puppet who lost its soul.

Shen Peichuan knew that whatever he said now would be useless; hence, he just kept quiet. When he left the room, he gently shut the door behind him.

Arriving at Captain Song's office, he knocked on the door and entered once Captain Song gave him permission to enter.

When Captain Song saw him, he put down his things and walked over from his desk. He asked, "Would you like something to drink?"

"I'm fine." Shen Peichuan replied.

Captain Song ushered him to the guest area, "Have a seat."

Shen Peichuan sat down and asked, "Is there something you want to see me about?"

After pondering for a moment, Captain Song asked, "Do you plan to marry Sang Yu?"

Shen Peichuan looked at Captain Song in bewilderment. Although Captain Song had always looked after him as if he were his father, the sudden question still caught him by surprise. "Why are you asking me this?"

“Let me get something to drink.” Captain Song stood up and prepared some tea before returning to his seat. Looking at Shen Peichuan, he continued, “I just found out that Sang Yu’s mother was a convict.”

“She doesn’t have much of a family background either; hence, there’s no benefit in marrying her.”

Shen Peichuan replied, “I know.”

“Knowing this, do you still plan to go out with her?” Captain Song asked.

Captain Song was only thinking about Shen Peichuan’s future. With his capabilities, he would rise far above his current station as deputy chief. Furthermore, he had a long and bright future ahead.

If he married Sang Yu, who was just an ordinary girl with a convict as a mother, it would negatively affect his career prospects.

Instead, if he were to have a wife with good connections, his career development would become a lot smoother. On the other hand, if he married Sang Yu, his career path will be a harder slog instead.

Shen Peichuan understood Captain Song’s concern. However, he had never wanted to rely on his wife for his career advancement.

Despite his ambitions, he still wanted was to rely on himself.

“My expectations of a wife are simple. I just want both parties to get along well. Everything else is not important to me.”

Captain Song wasn’t surprised as the answer was within his expectations. In fact, he would have thought lesser of Shen Peichuan if he broke up with Sang Yu over something like that.

He stood up and patted Shen Peichuan on his shoulder. "In that case, you should mentally prepare yourself."

Shen Peichuan grunted in acknowledgment.

"I have always admired you and have hoped to have you as my son-in-law. Unfortunately, fate has other plans. Nevertheless, from a professional perspective, I will help you fight for whatever you deserve."

Captain Song retracted his hands, "Alright, back to work. It's not easy for her at these trying times, so remember to treat her well."

Shen Peichuan looked up and wanted to correct Captain Song's impression of his relationship with Sang Yu. But decided against it as this was a sensitive moment. Instead, he replied, "I understand. In that case, I'll head back out."

Captain Song waved him away. "Go ahead."

But when Shen Peichuan returned to his office and opened the door, he noticed that Sang Yu was gone. The room was empty, and the glass of water was left untouched.

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Where did she go?

Shen Peichuan turned around and asked the first person that passed by, “Did you see anyone leave my office?”

The person shook his head, “No, I didn’t.”

Could she have returned to campus since she doesn’t have anywhere to go?

Holding that thought, Shen Peichuan headed out and bumped into Song Yaxin, who happened to have just entered.

“Why are you in such a rush? Where are you going?” Song Yaxin was in a long floral dress with matching white sandals. With her curly hair strewn over her shoulders and exquisite makeup, she smiled at him.

Shen Peichuan replied, “Nowhere.”

“Is that so? Then would you like some tea? I have something to talk to you about.” She smirked. “Would you like to go somewhere else, or your office is fine?”

“Yaxin, I’m busy, actually...”

“Didn’t you just say you weren’t? Are you trying to avoid me because of what happened at my place?”

“No...”

“Then what is it? We have known each other for such a long time, and yet, you still don’t understand me? I wanted to apologize to you. I divorced Chen Tao because he cheated on me. Consequently, I have a bad impression of men and will subconsciously take it out on anyone I come across. But I have regretted my actions over the last few days and wanted to apologize to you in particular.”

“You don’t have to as I didn’t take it personally. But I really need to go now.” Just as Shen Peichuan spoke, he nodded apologetically and hurried out.

“I’m here.”

Just when he stepped out, Sang Yu called out to him.

She didn’t leave. All she did was look for the officer-in-charge to arrange for her mother’s burial. Along the way, she passed by Captain Song’s office and overheard their conversation.

Although she did want to become someone who could help Shen Peichuan, she was cognizant of the fact that it would be difficult even after she graduated. Now that he was highly placed, she felt that he deserved to progress further given how capable he was.

To her, it was better for him to marry someone who could help him in his career.

Shen Peichuan frowned. “Where did you go?”

“I went to see the officer-in-charge who briefed me about what happened. I hope to give her a proper burial as soon as possible.”

Looking at them, Song Yaxin grinned. “You guys carry on. I’ll leave you to your business.”

On the surface, she made herself look like the bigger person. When in fact, she didn’t think that way at all.

However, to make a good impression on Shen Peichuan, she had no choice but to act that way.

With that, she left.

The moment her face was out of their view, her smile disappeared.

“Whatever help you need, just let me know,” Shen Peichuan offered.

Sang Yu shook her head, “There’s not much to help with. I will take her back to our hometown to be buried.”

Shen Peichuan stared at her, “Are you feeling better?”

Just a moment ago, she seemed to have broken down. But why is she acting as if nothing had happened now?

How can she be alright? She must just be hiding it. After all, she is a strong girl.

“We only have one life. Therefore, I will continue to live mine to the best of my abilities. I figure my deceased mom wouldn’t want to see me feeling depressed.”

“It’s good that you think that way.” Shen Peichuan heaved a sigh of relief as he was really worried she couldn’t handle her emotions.

“Peichuan.” Su Zhan walked over. When he saw Sang Yu, he greeted her with a smile, “Oh? You’re here too, Sang Yu.”

“You must have something to discuss. I’ll take my leave now.” Sang Yu nodded at them and headed out. She had understood all the processes she needed to go through. Once they were done, she would be able to collect her mother’s body.

Su Zhan put his arm around Shen Peichuan’s shoulder. “Were you both arguing? Why does she look upset? Even her eyes are swollen. Did you bully her?”

However, Shen Peichuan ignored his questions and looked at him indifferently, “What do you want?”

Su Zhan smiled. “Actually, it’s not really important.”

“Since it’s not, you should leave.” Shen Peichuan headed back towards his office. Su Zhan followed him with his lips pursed. “Hey, how dare you put hoes before bros!”

Shen Peichuan made a grim expression and was visibly not in the mood to argue. Seeing that, Su Zhan gently bumped him with his shoulder. “Did you guys had a fight...”

“Can you shut up already?” Shen Peichuan interrupted him sharply.

Su Zhan cursed in his heart when he realized that Shen Peichuan was really in a bad mood. Hence, he stopped teasing and spoke in a serious tone, “Anyway, I have something to see you about.”

Pushing the door open, Shen Peichuan asked, “What is it?”

“Um... Jinghao has invited us to the villa. It seems like he wants to treat us to dinner.” Su Zhan’s gaze was focused elsewhere.

He wanted to ask Shen Peichuan along to the villa to freeload on dinner uninvited, whereby his real objective was to see Qin Ya.

However, since Shen Peichuan seemed to be in a bad mood, he knew Shen Peichuan would turn him down if he told him the truth. Hence, he lied and said that it was Zong Jinghao that invited them instead.

Since he couldn’t find an excuse to drop by the villa, he had no choice but to drag Shen Peichuan along.

As for Shen Peichuan, he wasn't suspicious at all. Hence, he grunted in agreement.

Meanwhile, Su Zhan made himself at home as he poured a glass of water for himself. "It's already four now. I'll wait a while for you, and we can head there together."

He took the glass and lay down on the sofa.

Putting down the case files in his hands, Shen Peichuan looked at Su Zhan. "Since you have time, why don't you go on ahead? Qin Ya's there anyway."

Su Zhan declared shamelessly, "Unlike all of you who put hoes before bros, I'm actually a pretty decent man."

"Even if all decent men are dead, you wouldn't even be considered one." Shen Peichuan easily saw through him. "Are you afraid of Qin Ya?"

Su Zhan was defiant, "Why should I be?"

Even if he were, he knew he couldn't admit it for fear of being ridiculed, especially not in front of the guys.

But as usual, Shen Peichuan saw through him. "Just keep denying it."

Pretending not to have heard him, Su Zhan put his legs on the coffee table and shook it around.

When it was five, he began to feel restless and kept pestering Shen Peichuan to finish his work. "It's time. Let's go."

After that, Shen Peichuan was dragged out of his office by Su Zhan.

"Let's just go in one car." Su Zhan dragged Shen Peichuan towards his car.

Feeling peeved, Shen Peichuan pushed his hand away. “What are you in such a hurry for?”

“I’m hungry,” Su Zhan cooked up a random excuse.

When they arrived at the villa, Zong Jinghao had just returned home with the two kids. Lin Xinyan and the kids were sitting on the sofa eating watermelon while Zong Jinghao went to bathe because he was too sweaty.

“Mommy, look at what I picked up at the claw machine.” Zong Yanxi began to show off. “We went to the arcade at the mall. There were so many games there to play, and we tried everything once. It was really fun.”

Lin Xinyan put another piece of watermelon into her mouth. “Is that why you came back so late?”

“That’s right. I wish we can go again.” Zong Yanxi began to look forward to her next trip. Hugging the furry doll in her hands affectionately, she ignored Baymax.

Zong Yanchen glanced at his sister. “How much did you spend to grab that doll?”

As if he struck a nerve, Zong Yanxi exploded, “Why do you care how much money I spent. I didn’t spend any of yours anyway. Daddy says that it doesn’t matter as long as I’m happy. Why must you tell Mommy how much I spent? Didn’t you spend a lot playing racing games too?”

“We’re different. When I was racing, I lost in the beginning but started winning later on. As for you, you spent a thousand plus just to get the doll. Every attempt costs two tokens. With that many tokens, how many attempts did you make? That’s the equivalent of spending a thousand plus to buy your doll.”

Lin Xinyan tilted her head to look at the doll her daughter was holding. It looked like an ordinary doll that would likely cost seventy to eighty in a toy shop. *Did she actually spend a thousand at the claw machine to grab that?*

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Lin Xinyan furrowed her eyebrows. The main reason was that the doll wasn't worth that much. But, she didn't reprimand her daughter as she knew that it was just a game. It wasn't important how much the prize cost. The joy from playing the game was all that mattered.

She tousled Zong Yanxi's hair. "Did you enjoy yourself?"

Zong Yanxi nodded vehemently. "Yes, I did! Daddy bought me whatever I wanted."

Just as she spoke, she took out a luxury bag from within the paper bag she brought back. Slinging it behind her, she showed it to Lin Xinyan. "Mommy, do you think it looks good?"

She even twirled herself around.

"Mmm-hmm."

Lin Xinyan told her that it was beautiful before reaching her hand into the paper bag and realizing that there was another one. Zong Yanxi rushed towards her. "Mommy, this is a design for both mother and daughter, so this one is yours. Next time, we can carry them together."

Taking the bag out, she could see it really was the latest edition of Hermes' mother and daughter collection. No matter what brand it was, the latest products would always be the most expensive. As they were from Hermes itself, they would definitely have cost a bomb.

She didn't even manage to use the last bag she bought. "It's kind of a waste."

“Mommy, don’t you like it?” Zong Yanxi asked.

“I love it.” Women always had a weakness for designer bags. Despite feeling it was too much money to spend on a bag, she was still happy to receive it. After all, it was a present from her husband.

At that moment, the doorbell suddenly rang. Aunt Wang was in the kitchen cooking while Aunt Yu was helping Qin Ya to stand up. When she heard the children return, Qin Ya had asked Aunt Yu to do so. No one was free to open the door at the moment, so Lin Xinyan went to get it.

It was Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan.

“Xinyan.”

Lin Xinyan moved aside for them to come in.

She knew they were definitely here for dinner given the timing. Lin Xinyan called out to Aunt Wang and requested her to prepare more for dinner.

“Did you go out shopping?” Su Zhan saw that the sofa was strewn with things.

Before Lin Xinyan could reply, Zong Yanxi began to show off. “That’s right, Daddy brought us out to play.”

Su Zhan laughed, “Is that so?”

“Of course.” Zong Yanxi smiled gleefully as she packed her things back into her paper bag. As if she suddenly recalled something, she slapped her forehead. “Oh! I even bought something for Baymax.”

It was light blue dog costume with a cap.

Lin Xinyan watched on as Zong Yanxi excitedly helped Baymax put it on. When she saw how happy her daughter was, she couldn't help but smile.

"Would the both of you like anything to drink?" Lin Xinyan asked Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan.

"I'm alright." Shen Peichuan replied. Su Zhan said the same since he had a drink at Shen Peichuan's office.

"Since you bought something for the dog, did you buy anything for me?" Su Zhan teased Zong Yanxi while sitting on the sofa.

Zong Yanxi raised her head with her eyes widened. "Why should I buy anything for you?"

Snorting, Zong Yanchen couldn't help but laugh.

"Uncle Su is..." he stopped abruptly.

Su Zhan turned his attention to Zong Yanchen, who was covering his mouth. Squinting his eyes, he asked, "What were you going to say? Why did you stop?"

Su Zhan obviously knew what he was going to say next as he wasn't an idiot.

Meanwhile, Zong Yanchen shook his head and no longer dared to say anything. He was also aware that he shouldn't.

However, Zong Yanxi was oblivious to what was going on and asked, "Yanchen, what were you going to say? Why did you stop? How can you say something halfway?"

Zong Yanchen answered, "I can't tell you as I'm afraid Uncle Su will beat me up."

“What did you want to say that will cause Uncle Su to do that?” Zong Yanxi questioned persistently and didn’t look like she was giving up until she got her answer.

“Your brother wanted to say that he is worse than a dog.” With Aunt Yu supporting her, Qin Ya answered Zong Yanxi’s question as she had overheard their conversation.

“Oh, I see.” Zong Yanxi seemed to understand after giving it some thought. Since she bought something for Baymax, but not for Uncle Su, that meant Uncle Su was worse off than Baymax.

“I’ll buy something for you next time, Uncle Su. So, what would you like?” She lifted her head.

As Su Zhan looked into her big bright eyes, he felt a warm sensation in his heart. He reached out his hands to pinch her cheeks. “Thank you. Why are you just so adorable?”

“Do you like me then?” Zong Yanxi asked gleefully.

Su Zhan replied without hesitation, “Of course, everyone loves kids.”

“Do you love kids too?”

“Of course. I, too, want to be a father next time.” Su Zhan replied.

When she heard the topic, Qin Ya’s heart squeezed so hard that she felt suffocated. After settling down on the sofa, she requested, “Aunt Yu, please pour me a glass of water.”

After Aunt Yu handed her the water, she gulped it down. Only then was she gradually able to control her emotions.

Sensing that she was upset, Su Zhan asked in concern, “Are you feeling under the weather?”

Qin Ya replied with a smile, “Which eye of yours spied that I’m not feeling well?” As she spoke, she stroked Baymax on the head and looked at his costume. She then turned to look at what Su Zhan was wearing. Realizing that they were the same color, she asked gleefully, “Are both of you wearing couple shirts?”

Shen Peichuan was speechless.

As for Su Zhan, he stared at Qin Ya dumbfounded.

Leaning back into the sofa, Qin Ya added with a smile, “Oh, I’m sorry. I made a mistake. Baymax and you are of the same gender, so you can’t be a couple.”

Lin Xinyan understood the emotional baggage Qin Ya was carrying. Under previous circumstances, she would feel that Qin Ya was being really mean. But now, not at all.

After all, how could insulting words compare to the emotional devastation she experienced.

After she packed up the paper bags, she took them upstairs with her.

Downstairs, the atmosphere was filled with tension as Su Zhan glared coldly at Qin Ya. After a long silence, he broke out into a smile. “What’s wrong? Don’t you like the sight of me?”

“I’m just telling the truth. So don’t get yourself agitated,” Qin Ya laughed in response.

“I’m not agitated.” Su Zhan pretended to be at ease. Grinning, he teased her, “Given how you’re insulting me, it makes me think that you care for me. Actually, I do enjoy you doing it.”

Qin Ya rolled her eyes at him. “In your dreams!”

“It is my dream.” He then bent down to stroke Baymax’s fur. “I don’t know whether you have a heart. If not, I don’t mind being your best friend.”

When he heard his words, Shen Peichuan raised his eyebrows in surprise. *What is he talking about? Doesn’t it also mean that I am indirectly Baymax’s best friend too?*

Su Zhan thought to himself, *if one doesn’t have a heart, one will not have any emotions. Without emotions, one will not feel anguish.*

“If you and Baymax become best friends, doesn’t that make you a dog?” Zong Yanxi didn’t understand what Su Zhan was insinuating.

Su Zhan laughed. “Didn’t you notice that Aunt Qin hates me? If it pleases her, I’m even willing to turn into a worm, let alone a dog.”

Meanwhile, Shen Peichuan was feeling down due to Sang Yu’s situation. Hence, he didn’t say a word throughout. However, whatever was going on here was equally depressing.

To create some privacy for Su Zhan and Qin Ya, he suggested to the kids, “Why don’t we play outside?”

Both the kids waved their hands at the same time. “We want to return to our rooms to rest.”

After spending the day outside, they were exhausted. Shen Peichuan added, “I’ll come with you.”

Going with them back to their rooms works too. As long as I’m not in the living hall.

“Uncle Shen, are you tired too?” Zong Yanxi asked.

Shen Peichuan replied, “Mmm-hmm. So is it okay if I rest in your room for a while?”

“Of course.” Zong Yanxi carried her things as she held Shen Peichuan’s hand tightly. After which, she led him back to her room.

Zong Yanchen obviously knew what was going on and followed. He, too, bought a toy which was a race track with remote control cars. When he reached the room, he didn’t want to rest. Instead, he sat on the carpet and started assembling the track.

Shen Peichuan lay down on the sofa by the window while Zong Yanxi arranged all her bags and dolls on the bed. The atmosphere was harmonious and vastly different from what was going on in the living hall.

As Su Zhan looked at Qin Ya, he had the urge to ask her what she wanted him to do before she could forgive him.

He knew that it wasn’t a rational move. Even if he asked, he knew the answer would be consistent with her attitude towards him, which was, “I will never forgive you.”

She was really stubborn when it came to him.

“Do we really need to do this? Can’t we talk calmly?”

Qin Ya snorted. “I am only patient with the people I like, and I’m sorry, but you’re not one of them. And yet, you like to keep showing your face before me. Given the foul mood I’m in, you should be grateful that I’m not cursing and swearing at you.”

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“Do you still have feelings...”

“Mr. Su, please don’t say such weird things in front of me. I do not have time to listen.” With that, she called out to Aunt Yu, who was helping to prepared dinner.

Despite clenching his fist, Su Zhan maintained his smile. “Are you trying to avoid me? If you have really gotten over me, you would be able to face me calmly. Your current behavior suggests to me that you still have feelings for me.”

“Hah! What a joke,” Qin Ya sneered.

Suddenly, Su Zhan stood up and put his hands on both sides of the sofa. He lowered his gaze and looked her in the eye. “That’s right. I am!”

Qin Ya pretended to remain calm. “Please move aside!”

Meanwhile, Aunt Yu poked her head out as she heard Qin Ya’s call earlier. When she saw Su Zhan, she quickly tucked her head back in and pretended she didn’t hear a thing.

When Aunt Wang saw that she didn’t go out, she asked, “Didn’t Ms. Qin call you? Why aren’t you going to her?”

Aunt Yu frantically shushed Aunt Wang with her finger to her lip and whispered, “We can’t go out now.”

“Why?” Unlike Aunt Yu, Aunt Wang wasn’t aware of Qin Ya and Su Zhan’s relationship. Hence, Aunt Yu explained, “She and Su Zhan are having an argument. Since both of them are talking, it’s not a good idea for me to disrupt them. I think it’s better to give them some space.”

Aunt Wang replied softly, "Ah... so they're a couple."

Aunt Yu nodded.

When Qin Ya didn't see Aunt Yu approach, she began to feel anxious and wanted to call her again. "Aunt..."

Before she could utter a word, Su Zhan covered her mouth as he gazed deeply into her eyes. "Since you have no more feelings for me, you shouldn't hide from me."

Qin Ya pushed his hand away forcefully. "Are you crazy?"

Su Zhan retreated a few steps backward from the force and bumped into the coffee table. After struggling for a moment, he managed to find his balance. "I wish that I can be crazy too, but I'm can't!"

He knelt down in front of Qin Ya. "Ya, stop tormenting me, will you?"

With her body trembling, Qin Ya tightened her grip on the sofa's armrest. "You must be joking to think that I'm tormenting you. Who do you think you are..."

Before she could finish, her mouth was covered by Su Zhan. Only this time, it was with lips instead.

Qin Ya's eyes widened in shock.

Su Zhan kissed her forcefully, ignoring everything else.

After being briefly stunned, Qin Ya pushed him away with all her strength. "Su Zhan, f*** you!"

"You can say whatever you want, and you can treat me however you want. But, you have to give me an answer." Su Zhan held her hands tightly. "Tell me what

you want me to do to redeem myself. Once I've done it, you will have to give me another chance.”

“Never!” Qin Ya refused without even thinking.

There's no way I'm going to be with another man in this lifetime. I'm already grateful for just being alive. Where do I find the capacity within me for love?

“I will marry anyone, regardless of whether they are short or ugly, as long as that person isn't you.” Every single word of hers was resolute and unfeeling.

Su Zhan's heart stopped beating suddenly.

Despite how strong his passion for her burned, it seemed to have been doused by ice water.

“You...”

Qin Ya continued her sharp words, “How many times do I have to repeat myself before you stop stalking me? Do you know how much you're making me hate you?”

“Ya, I-I... At this rate, my feelings for you will be gone.” Su Zhan's eyes reddened.

“Have you ever been kind to me? I'll be thankful when you stop obsessing over me because it's extremely agonizing to be stalked by you.” Ignoring her wounds, she stood up angrily from the sofa and glared at Su Zhan. Her eyes began to mist as she couldn't control her emotions. “Do you know that I'm filled with the urge to slap you now? So that I can vent the rage in me. You really have no idea how much I hate you!”

She hates me!

She hates me!

The words reverberated within Su Zhan's mind incessantly.

Given how harsh her words were, Su Zhan's eyes widened, and his lips trembled as if he was being blown by a strong gust of icy wind. After pausing a moment, he replied, "I'll slap myself for your sake."

Slap!

He slapped himself with all his might and stared at Qin Ya. "Is that enough?"

Not expecting him to hit himself, Qin Ya stood there in a daze. Her heart was palpitating wildly, and she could feel her stomach churn.

"If you feel that slapping me will help you vent your frustration and ease your feelings, then I'm happy to do so." He lifted Qin Ya's hand and slapped it on his face. The impact was so forceful that Qin Ya even felt her palm go numb.

When he was about to repeat the slap, Qin Ya balled her fingers into a fist and pulled it in the opposite direction. "If you want to behave like a madman, do it alone. Don't drag me along with you."

"No, we have to do this together. Even if you stab me into a bloody mess, I will still not let you go. Qin Ya, there's no way you can get rid of me in this lifetime." Su Zhan asserted word by word, after which he burst into laughter. "It doesn't matter if you think I'm crazy or despicable. I am that shameless. There are only two possibilities for me to stop obsessing over you. One is that I lose my memory, and the other is if I'm dead."

Qin Ya, too, lost her composure as tears gushed out of her eyes. The more she cried, the more intense it became. Despite how heartbroken she was, she remained stubborn. "Do you think I will forgive you by doing this? Dream on!"

Just as she spoke, she hobbled towards her room.

Su Zhan regained his senses quickly and carried her by sweeping her off her feet. “Your leg isn’t fully recovered yet. Walking will aggravate your wound, so let me carry you.”

She had lost a lot of weight compared to last time.

“I don’t need you to carry me. Let go of me!” Qin Ya struggled vehemently and pounded on his chest.

“Go ahead and throw a tantrum. You will just cause everybody to worry about you.” Despite how hard she struggled and how insulting her words were, he didn’t let go.

Once he entered the room and closed the door, he helped Qin Ya sit by the bed. Ignoring her resentment, he held onto her hands tightly. “No matter how much you hate and curse me, I won’t care. I’ve decided not to listen to you and use my own way to win your heart. You can reject me all you want as pursuing you is my business. I can’t force you to accept me, but neither can you force me to give up.”

Qin Ya’s tears streaked down her cheeks one by one. Through the tears in her eyes, she could see the red finger marks left on his face. In a choking voice, she sneered, “Do you think that I will accept you just by doing this?”

“I’m not asking you to accept me. But I do have the right to pursue whoever I fancy. You can’t stop me!”

With that, Su Zhan stood up and straightened his messy collar. Standing up proudly, he let out a chivalrous smile. “Let me introduce myself. My name is Su Zhan, and I manage a law firm. I can’t guarantee that my future wife will be bathed in luxury, but I will definitely make sure that she will have a comfortable life. I’ve lost my parents and only have an aging Grandma left. This is what my life is like. It isn’t great, but it’s not bad either.”

He continued, "Ms. Qin, I really like you, and from this moment onwards, I will try my best to win your heart. Pursuing happiness is everyone's right. Hence, you can reject me, but you can't stop me. You may think that I'm shameless or thick-skinned, but I don't care. The only thing I can do is be tenacious so that I have no regrets. Therefore, no one has the right to stop me from expressing my love."

Qin Ya was at a loss for words. All she could do now was cry.

Seeing that, Su Zhan helped her wipe her tears. "Don't cry. It's breaking my heart."

"Stop it!" Qin Ya screamed at him softly.

"I have made it clear that I'm just sticking to what my heart tells me to. No one can interfere." Su Zhan caressed her face and wiped her tears again. "If you keep crying, you will cause me to think that you have relented."

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“Get out!” Qin Ya would have gone ballistic if she weren’t being mindful of where she was.

Su Zhan didn’t move as he looked at her. “Ya...”

“Will you only quit if I died in front of you?” She pressed her chest with her hands as she could hardly breathe.

It hurt so badly that she thought she was about to die.

Not wanting to challenge her limits, Su Zhan gradually stood up. “I’ll give you some time.”

Just as he spoke, he walked out of the room and closed the door behind him. Inside, Qin Ya’s cries seemed to have grown louder. She allowed her emotions to pour out freely since she was alone. Meanwhile, Lin Xinyan was standing on the second floor. When she saw Su Zhan come out, she let out a long and gentle sigh.

Given the commotion they made downstairs, everyone was aware of what went on. Furthermore, they knew it wasn’t appropriate for them to appear.

Zong Jinghao hugged her from behind. “Don’t watch anymore.”

Lin Xinyan followed him back to the bedroom. “I wanna ask you something, and you need to answer me, frankly.”

“Sure, ask away.”

“If I can’t have children, will you treat me as well as how you’re treating me now?”
Lin Xinyan raised her gaze towards him.

Zong Jinghao looked at her, “What are you babbling about?”

The kids are already so big. So what’s the point in hypothetical questions like that?

Why is she acting so strangely and asking such childish questions?

It’s so childish that it’s the equivalent of ladies asking their boyfriends who they will save if their mother and they themselves fall into the water.

“I’m asking you now. You have to answer me truthfully.” Holding onto his collar, Lin Xinyan wasn’t going to let him go until she got an answer.

Zong Jinghao lowered his gaze to look at her hands and replied, “No, I won’t. I will still love you the same way, but I’ll have some regrets.”

More often so, a couple who love each other but couldn’t have kids would feel a sense of emptiness. Just the thought of not having Zong Yanxi and Zong Yanchen in his life was unacceptable to him.

Lin Xinyan gradually let go. *That’s right. They may love each other, but it’s more than that. Raising children is an experience every couple should go through. It’s also the time when a woman transitions into being a mother, while the man gets to feel the excitement of being a father.*

She lowered her gaze. *How is Qin Ya going to cope?*

Zong Jinghao realized that she seemed disturbed. “What’s wrong?”

She shook her head. “Nothing.”

However, her expression reflected otherwise. Zong Jinghao leaned in to kiss her lips, but Lin Xinyan glared at him with her eyebrows furrowed instead.

He smiled, "You look ugly when there's something bugging you, so stop frowning."

Lin Xinyan slapped him on the chest. "You're the one who's ugly."

"Oh, is that so?" He replied with his eyebrows raised.

Lin Xinyan retorted, "Yeah! Every single part of you is ugly."

With that, she hastily entered the room and tried to close the door to shut him out. However, Zong Jinghao was quick enough to block the door. But he didn't dare do it forcefully as he was worried that he would hurt the baby inside her tummy. As he curled his fingers around the door, Lin Xinyan didn't dare close it for fear of crushing his fingers.

"Get out," Lin Xinyan pretended to be angry.

"No, I won't." Zong Jinghao was equally defiant. "Stop fooling around."

"Then you shouldn't have said that I was ugly!" Lin Xinyan continued to feign anger. "I have decided to draw a boundary between us. This is my room, so you're not allowed to enter."

Hearing that, Zong Jinghao was speechless.

The next moment, he admitted defeat. "Fine, you're not ugly. I'm the ugly one."

Tickled by his response, Lin Xinyan let go of the door and allowed Zong Jinghao to enter. He then hugged her as they lay on the bed. Stroking her head, he allowed her to take a good look at himself. Still holding a grudge over her comment earlier, he asked again, "Am I really ugly?"

Lin Xinyan was amused that he was actually upset over something like that. Laughing, she replied, "You are, but I don't mind."

Zong Jinghao was dumbfounded.

"Do you seriously think so?"

Lin Xinyan continued to toy around with him, "Mmm-hmm."

"Are you really that naive to think that just because a lot of people fancy you, it means that you're handsome? It's only because you're rich. Nowadays, ladies prefer rich men over poor ones, just like me. I like the fact that you're rich."

Zong Jinghao was amused despite being insulted. "Don't you feel sorry for ridiculing your own husband?"

Lin Xinyan teased him, "I'm heartless after all, so I'm incapable of having such feelings."

Zong Jinghao pinched her cheeks and pulled her into his embrace. "You're really naughty."

Lin Xinyan put her face close to his heart and whispered, "Thank you for cheering me up."

Zong Jinghao sighed as he was still unable to ease her worries. He asked, "Tell me, what's wrong? What's bugging you?"

Feeling uneasy, Lin Xinyan grabbed onto his collar. She could easily imagine how depressed she would be if she couldn't give Zong Jinghao any children.

As a woman, she clearly understood how Qin Ya felt. Qin Ya wasn't willing to accept her condition and also didn't want to face Su Zhan.

Zong Jinghao lowered his gaze at her and gently slapped her buttocks. "You're such a vixen."

Lin Xinyan glared at him. "If I'm a vixen, what does that make you?"

Without hesitating, he replied, "You're the vixen while I'm the man bewitched by the vixen." Just as he spoke, he tucked her hair behind her ear as if he understood what was troubling her. He asked, "Was it because of Qin Ya?"

Lin Xinyan nodded.

Now, Zong Jinghao finally understood everything and why she had asked him such a weird question.

He consoled her. "Everyone has their own path to take. So don't worry too much."

Lin Xinyan clearly understood that this was something that couldn't be changed. The only thing they could do was to accept it. But, she still couldn't help but feel sorry for Qin Ya.

Knock, knock.

At that moment, Aunt Yu knocked on the door. "Dinner is ready."

They could hear Aunt Yu's voice from behind the door.

However, Lin Xinyan was too lazy to get up.

"Do you want me to bring the food up for you?" Zong Jinghao saw how exhausted she was.

Lin Xinyan laughed. She wasn't going to let him do that as they had guests. "You should cook for me when we're alone next time."

“Sure. I’ll make soup for you.” Zong Jinghao chuckled as he looked at her affectionately. He wasn’t in a position to refuse.

After all, she’s the love of my life. No one forced me to fall in love with her either. Hence, I just have to accept it.

Having been informed by Aunt Yu, Shen Peichuan and the two kids came out as well. When he saw the palm print on Su Zhan’s face, he scratched his nose and thought, *what is he thinking? With such an obvious mark on his face, why doesn’t he leave? Is he not afraid of being embarrassed?*

When Su Zhan saw that Shen Peichuan was feeling awkward, he rubbed his cheeks and laughed heartily. “Even though she slapped me, at least there’s still someone. But you, my friend, you don’t even have one to do so. You’re the one who should feel bad.”

Just as he spoke, he held Zong Yanxi’s hands. “Come, let us wash up first before we eat.”

Shen Peichuan was dumbfounded.

Zong Jinghao patted him on the shoulder. “It’s nice of you to drop by today.”

Shen Peichuan gave him a puzzled look. “Didn’t you invite us over for dinner?”

Zong Jinghao’s expression clearly showed that he didn’t.

Shen Peichuan quickly realized what was going on and laughed. “I should’ve known.”

He is going all out to win Qin Ya back.

Meanwhile, Aunt Wang started serving dinner while everyone took their seats at the table. Just when Lin Xinyan was wondering whether to invite Qin Ya to join them, Su Zhan preempted her, “Xinyan.”

Lin Xinyan regained her senses and asked, “What is it?”

“Ya definitely won’t be willing to join us. Why don’t you prepare some food, and I’ll bring it to her.”

Lin Xinyan glance at him and replied, “Come with me.”

Su Zhan followed her into the kitchen.

As she wanted to have a word with Su Zhan, she got Aunt Wang to give them some privacy.

After washing her hands, Aunt Wang left the kitchen. When there was no one else around, she called out, “Su Zhan.”

“Yes, Xinyan.” Su Zhan acknowledged politely. He was aware of why she wanted to speak to him in private. “You want to talk to me about Qin Ya?”

Lin Xinyan nodded and sighed, “Su Zhan...” She paused as she tried to think of the best way to break it to him.

Su Zhan added, “Ya considers you as her family, and so have I. So you can say whatever you wish to tell me.”

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As Lin Xinyan looked at Su Zhan, she had the urge to tell him about Qin Ya's situation and let him know the anguish she was suffering from.

However, her rationality beat out her impulsiveness in the end as she had promised Qin Ya that she wouldn't tell Su Zhan.

"Ya has gone through a lot. As a man, you will have to bear with her even though she may scold or hit you."

"I understand." Su Zhan lowered his head. "The past was all my fault..."

"Su Zhan," Lin Xinyan continued. "I'm not talking about that. It doesn't matter for whatever reason or what she did; you have to unconditionally accept her. Can you promise me that?"

Su Zhan began to feel uneasy. "Xinyan, you should just go ahead and tell me. Otherwise, you're making me feel anxious as if you're hiding something from me."

"Just promise me." Lin Xinyan was not going to spill the beans. It was better for Qin Ya to tell him herself when she was mentally ready to do so.

Regardless of whether they reconciled in the end, it was only proper for Qin Ya to tell him herself.

After all, Qin Ya carried his child before. Although it was unfortunate they lost it, it still meant a lot to them.

After retrieving a plate and a bowl from the kitchen cupboard, she filled it with rice and soup. And then she filled another empty plate with food from the table since none was set aside earlier.

Finally, she put them on a tray and handed the tray to Su Zhan.

Su Zhan followed her instructions obediently just like a child who did something wrong. After all, his mishandling of the matter with Liu Feifei caused Qin Ya to go through a hellish experience. Therefore, he was in her debt for life. Going forward, all he could do was to make up for it and to love her with all he had.

Lin Xinyan chose three of Qin Ya's favorite dishes and loaded them on the tray. "Take them to her."

Su Zhan acknowledged. "You don't have to wait for me."

"Who's waiting for you? We're going to finish all the food." Shen Peichuan didn't even look up as he stuffed a mouthful of food into his mouth.

Su Zhan chuckled. "Slow down, tiger. Don't choke on your food."

He left right after he spoke.

Meanwhile, Zong Yanxi laughed gleefully by the side. "Uncle Shen, did you just get insulted by Uncle Su?"

"By saying it out loud, you're humiliating me more than he did. Do you know that?" Shen Peichuan looked at the little girl.

Zong Yanxi's was further delighted. "I know, that's why I'm doing it on purpose. Hehe."

Shen Peichuan pretended to be angry, "Look at you. Your tongue is growing sharper by the day. Be careful, or no one wants to marry you when you grow up."

When Zong Jinghao heard Shen Peichuan's words, he looked up and shifted his gaze towards his cute daughter. She was still young, and her exquisite soft cheeks made her look like a doll.

Suddenly, he put down his chopsticks. The thought of his daughter marrying someone else when she was all grown up struck a nerve with him.

No one deserves my daughter.

The more he thought about it, the more upset he became. In fact, he was so perplexed that he stormed out of the dining room. Shen Peichuan was puzzled and looked towards Lin Xinyan. "Xinyan, what's gotten into him? Did I say anything wrong?"

Lin Xinyan glanced at Zong Jinghao and replied, "It's nothing. Just continue eating. I'll check on him later."

Shen Peichuan nodded and continued with dinner. Occasionally he would banter with the children.

Meanwhile, Qin Ya lay on her bed and didn't get up despite Su Zhan calling out to her a few times. She pretended not to hear him.

Su Zhan sat by her bedside. "No matter how much you resent me, you still need to eat. Are you tormenting yourself on purpose to break my heart?"

"That's right. I resent you, so please leave." Qin Ya was sick of his nagging.

"It's fine if you don't like me. I'll teach you how to appreciate me slowly." Su Zhan reached out to tug her blanket away so that she would eat. But, she flew into a rage instead.

"Get out!" she screamed as she couldn't tolerate it anymore.

“I’ll leave after you have your meal.” Su Zhan offered mischievously. “Come on.”

When Qin Ya finally sat up, Su Zhan could clearly see that her eyes were swollen red from crying. Feeling heartbroken, he reached out to touch her, but his hand was slapped away instead. “If you don’t leave me alone, I will disappear from your sight. You will never be able to find me. Su Zhan, I really mean it.”

Su Zhan didn’t dare say another word and stood up quickly. “Okay, okay. I’m leaving. Your wound isn’t fully healed, so you should rest more. Go ahead and eat. I’m leaving now.”

Just as he spoke, he left immediately. He was worried that Qin Ya would do what she said, and he wouldn’t be able to see her anymore.

Meanwhile, Shen Peichuan had finished dinner. When he saw Su Zhan return, he suggested, “Let’s go.”

Su Zhan wanted to stay a while longer as he was worried Qin Ya wouldn’t eat.

Realizing something was weighing on Su Zhan still, Shen Peichuan reached out his hands. “Hand me the car keys. You can ask the driver to send you home or drive one of Jinghao’s cars later. He has so many of them after all.”

Su Zhan pondered a moment. “I’ll go with you since she doesn’t want to see me anyway.”

Shen Peichuan smiled. “Let’s go then.”

“Xinyan, we’re taking our leave.” Both of them informed Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan replied, “Alright, drive safely since it’s already dark.”

Su Zhan nodded in acknowledgment.

After leaving the villa and getting into the car, Su Zhan asked, "Are you heading home?"

Shen Peichuan grunted in agreement but changed his mind the next moment. "Why don't you drop me off at the station."

"At this hour? Are you that busy?"

Shen Peichuan shot a glance at him. "My car is still at the station. Are you going to pick me up from work tomorrow?"

"I don't have the time." Su Zhan started the car and drove out of his parking spot.

In a short while, they arrived at the police station where Shen Peichuan alighted.

"Alright, then. See you tomorrow." Su Zhan remarked as he lowered his car window.

Shen Peichuan waved in acknowledgment as he headed back into the station. When he picked up his car keys from his office, he bumped into one of his subordinates, who was working overtime. Shen Peichuan looked at him and asked, "Did you just finish work?"

"Yes, I've just resolved a case."

Shen Peichuan enquired casually, "Which case?"

The man replied, "The one where the convict died in prison. Her next-of-kin just collected the body, so I have closed the case. Don't you know about it? Aren't you the..."

"When did she collect it?" Before he could finish, Shen Peichuan interrupted while whipping out his phone to call Sang Yu.

How did she manage to collect the body so quickly?

And why didn't she drop by to let me know?

Once he got through, all he heard was the call being dropped.

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 619

He frowned. *Why is it switched off? There's nowhere else she could go to except school, and the school is practically empty at this hour.* He turned towards the man and asked, "Did she say where she was going?"

The man shook his head and replied, "No, but she's probably on her way to the crematorium. Where else would she be taking the body to, right?"

"Got it." Shen Peichuan took a look at the time. *The person working at the crematorium should have gone off duty by now...*

He was about to step out of the office when he suddenly remembered something and called out to the man, "Is the address to her old house mentioned in the file?"

"It's in Jiang County."

"Do you have the exact address?" Shen Peichuan asked.

"I don't remember what it is, but it is stated on the file."

"Give me the file," Shen Peichuan said and headed back inside the office.

The man retrieved the file and handed it over to him.

"You may get off work now," Shen Peichuan told him as he glanced at the address on the file. *Jiang County is a rural area, and it's a little far away from B City. I planned on sending someone there with Sang Yu if I wasn't able to make it on time. She's a girl, after all. Judging by the looks of things now, she has probably gone off on her own...*

He closed the file and slumped against his chair, feeling worried about her safety as there was no way for him to track her exact location.

In the end, he got into his car and set a course for Jiang County on his GPS before driving off.

Little did he know that Sang Yu had yet to leave B City. As she wasn't planning on coming back, she had to complete the withdrawal procedures from the university first.

Shen Peichuan had his men look her up at dawn, but they weren't able to find anything on the train and plane tickets purchased under her name.

"You mean she hasn't bought any plane or train tickets?" Shen Peichuan felt his heart skip a beat. *How is she heading back then?*

"That's right, sir. It's possible that she took a bus or cab, but we can't really say for sure. Most of the buses don't pick up their customers from the station, and a lot of people don't purchase the tickets with their real name either."

"All right, I understand." Shen Peichuan hung up the phone after saying that.

Still worried, he decided to have a look at her old house.

Having taken care of things at the university, Sang Yu made a trip to the police station. She wanted to bid Shen Peichuan farewell as they wouldn't ever meet again after her departure.

"The deputy chief isn't in."

"Where did he go?" Sang Yu asked.

"I'm not sure. Maybe you can drop his house and have a look."

Sang Yu hesitated for a bit before asking, “In that case, could you tell me where he lives?”

She thanked the officer and left the station after getting his address.

Sang Yu then took a cab to his house and knocked on the door, but there was no response.

She waited outside until it was time for her bus to depart; there was still no sign of him. *I was hoping to say goodbye to him in person, but I guess I can only do so via phone call now...*

Sang Yu was in a bad mood after cremating her mother, so she had her phone switched off yesterday and locked herself in the hotel room.

She switched her phone on and dialed his number. To her dismay, all she heard was the automated message telling her that his phone had been switched off.

Shen Peichuan’s phone had run out of power after having the GPS on the entire night, and he was purchasing a charger from a rest stop at the time she called.

With some assistance from the police officers in the area, he was able to locate Sang Yu’s old house relatively quickly after arriving in Jiang County. However, the house had been abandoned for a long time, and the neighbors all claimed that the woman hadn’t returned.

Instead of leaving immediately, Shen Peichuan asked around about Sang Yu’s family. What he heard was pretty much the same as what she had told him.

Her mother went to prison after her father’s death, and the house was abandoned when she left for university.

The house was poorly constructed, to begin with, and it seemed uninhabitable after the prolonged lack of maintenance.

It was already afternoon when Shen Peichuan left the village. He rested for about two hours in a hotel before driving back to B City.

The long drive made him very exhausted, so he skipped the police station and went straight home.

He slept soundly through the night and was only woken up by the ringing of his mobile phone the next morning.

He grabbed the device and answered the call. "Where are you right now?" Captain Song sounded rather anxious.

"I'm sleeping at home," Shen Peichuan replied.

"Sleeping? You'd better come over to the station right now!" Captain Song ordered.

Shen Peichuan became wide awake when he heard how urgent Captain Song sounded. He quickly hung up, showered, and rushed to the police station.

Captain Song was attending to the men from the Prosecutors' Office. "That's impossible! I know Shen Peichuan very well! There's no way he would take bribes!"

"The higher-ups received a report about it, and they sent us here to investigate the matter. We don't think any of our law enforcement officers would do such a thing either. Trust me; we will get to the bottom of this."

Captain Song poured them all a glass of water. "Of course I trust you, but I also trust Shen Peichuan. After all, I trained him, and I'm sure you know my character very well."

Captain Song was very well-known and highly respected in the force for his integrity and righteousness.

“Yes, we know that. Rest assured, we will investigate this thoroughly and clear Deputy Chief Shen’s name if he really is innocent.”

Shen Peichuan went straight to Captain Song’s office when he arrived at the police station. He was a little shocked when he saw the men in black uniforms waiting inside.

These guys are from the Prosecutors’ Office! Who are they investigating?

“Come here, Peichuan,” Captain Song called out to him. Shen Peichuan figured that the investigation was probably related to him. Captain Song wouldn’t have sounded so anxious on the phone otherwise.

He walked over, and Captain Song whispered into his ear, “Someone has accused you of bribery. These men are here to investigate you, so you’d better be prepared.”

Shen Peichuan froze. *Bribery?*

A prosecutor stood up and asked, “You’re Shen Peichuan?”

“Yes, that’s right,” Shen Peichuan replied.

“The higher-ups have received a report about you taking bribes. We’re the prosecutors assigned to your case. Here’s the warrant,” The man said while placing a warrant on the desk. “You’re not allowed to participate in any police work until this investigation is over. Please give us your full cooperation.”

Captain Song frowned. “Why not? That’s practically suspension! Do you know how serious that is?”

“Yes. He is to be suspended until his name is cleared,” The prosecutor said matter-of-factly.

Captain Song was about to say something further in protest, but Shen Peichuan quickly stopped him. "You have my full cooperation."

He wasn't afraid of being investigated for something he knew he didn't do.

"Very well. Please ensure that you are reachable via mobile phone at all times as we may contact you at any given time."

"Got it," Shen Peichuan replied.

"What on earth is going on here?" Captain Song asked after the prosecutors left.

Shen Peichuan gave it some thought and replied, "Someone might be trying to set me up."

"Did you offend anyone lately?" Captain Song asked.

Shen Peichuan recalled everyone he had been in contact with and analyzed every possibility he could think of. *Gu Bei is the only one capable of doing something like this is...*

"I think so," he answered.

Captain Song looked perplexed. "But you're not the kind who would act rashly, so how could you have possibly offended anyone?"

Shen Peichuan stayed quiet at that remark.

"I'll do my best to help you out with this." Captain Song sighed.

"Thank you," Shen Peichuan said sincerely.

"There's no need to thank me. I'm not from the Prosecutors' Office, so I can't really help much either." Captain Song took his hat off in frustration. *I know Shen*

Peichuan would never take bribes, so whoever did this to him must be quite powerful. My options are very limited here. This could affect his future if it isn't handled well...

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Captain Song sat Shen Peichuan down and asked, "So, who did you offend?"

"Probably Gu Bei," Shen Peichuan said.

Captain Song was puzzled. "Gu Bei? I've never heard of this guy..."

"I'm referring to Gu Bei from the Gu family," Shen Peichuan explained.

That was when Captain Song understood what he meant. "Oh... You mean you offended Old Master Gu's spoilt brat?"

"Yeah..." Shen Peichuan lowered his gaze.

"But you aren't the type to go around looking for trouble. What'd you do to piss him off? Gu Bei isn't a public official, and the two of you have zero contact at work. This isn't a workplace conflict, so that means it's personal."

Shen Peichuan made no effort to hide anything from Captain Song. "Remember the incident at the temple? He abducted my friend's girlfriend, and I was investigating him. I'm guessing he knows I'm on the case and decided to set me up like this."

Captain Song shook his head helplessly. *Old Master Gu's connections run pretty deep. Considering how he has helped plenty of high-ranking officials get where they are now, doing the opposite would definitely be a piece of cake.*

"Don't worry. At worst, I'll lose my job. Sure, it'd be regrettable, but I'd accept it anyway." Shen Peichuan brushed it off casually.

Captain Song glared at him in disapproval. “Have you forgotten what you said when you first joined my team?”

“I wouldn’t want that to happen either, but being accused of bribery is no small matter.”

“I’ll see what I can do,” Captain Song said after a brief pause.

“You don’t have to.” Shen Peichuan didn’t want to cause Captain Song any trouble.

Captain Song was displeased to hear that. “Are you even listening to yourself? Your future is at stake here! What happened to the ambitious Shen Peichuan I know?”

Shen Peichuan kept his head low. “Of course, I wish to do what’s right! As much as I hate to face it, what’s happened has happened. I’m simply preparing myself for the worst-case scenario.”

He didn’t want to let anyone know about the matter – especially Zong Jinghao, who was preparing for his wedding.

“Look, you didn’t do it, so we have to try our best to clear your name. Don’t you give up on yourself, got it?” Captain Song advised.

Right as Shen Peichuan was drowning in guilt and shame for the trouble he had caused, Captain Song picked up his hat and announced, “I’m gonna get someone to look into this.”

“Thank you, sir.” Shen Peichuan didn’t know what else to say in response. Captain Song was like a father figure to him, and he couldn’t thank him enough.

Captain Song gave him a light pat on the shoulder. “Hey, no need to thank me. The innocent have nothing to fear, so pull yourself together!”

Shen Peichuan smiled. "I'm really grateful for your trust and support. I don't know how I'll ever be able to repay you."

"Keeping up the honest work is the best form of repayment you can give me." Captain Song left his office after saying that.

Shen Peichuan took a deep breath and returned to his office as well. He picked up Sang Yu's file on his desk and put it back in the archives.

He bumped into one of his men on his way back. "There's a letter for you, Deputy Chief."

"What letter?" Shen Peichuan asked.

"It's on my desk. I'll go get it for you." The man came back shortly after with a letter. "It's from Ms. Sang Yu. She asked me to pass this to you."

Shen Peichuan shuddered a little when he heard her name.

"When did she come here?" Shen Peichuan asked as he took the letter.

"Yesterday," the man replied.

Shen Peichuan frowned. "Yesterday?"

"Yes, that's right. She came looking for you, but you weren't in at the time. I gave her your address, but... I'm guessing she wasn't able to find you if she wrote you this letter."

"I see... All right, I understand." Shen Peichuan went back into his office and closed the door. He sat down by his desk and stared at the pink envelope, wondering what Sang Yu wrote him.

After a long pause, he decided to open the envelope and quickly examined its contents.

It was very neatly written with a black pen, and the message was clear and direct.

I wanted to bid you farewell in person, but I wasn't able to find you before I left. Perhaps we simply weren't meant to be. I mean, look at the difference in our age. You already have a successful career, while I haven't even graduated from university. That right there is the gap that separates us. It might be due to a lack of fatherly love, but I did have feelings for you. I like mature men, and you are exactly that. However, I also know that it's impossible for us to be together. You need a wife who can help you out in life, and I'm obviously not that kind of woman. I'm leaving B City now, and I won't be coming back, so I'm afraid we may never meet again. Thank you for looking after me all this while. By the way, you should hurry up and get yourself a girlfriend! You're not getting any younger, you know? Stop hesitating and be brave in your pursuit of happiness! Don't let any opportunities slip past you now! Lastly, I wish you all the best! Yours sincerely, Sang Yu.

Shen Peichuan lowered his gaze as he folded the letter and placed it back on the desk.

He whipped out his phone and tried dialing her number, but all he got was an automated message saying, "Sorry, that number no longer exists."

Sang Yu must be really determined to leave B City if she deactivated her SIM card...

Shen Peichuan then pulled up the phonebook and called Su Zhan instead.

Su Zhan was giving his grandmother a massage at the time of that call. Although the old woman had regained the ability to talk, walking remained impossible due to her old age.

“I wonder when Ya will come back... This is all your fault! You’d better apologize to her, you hear? I don’t care if you have to kneel and beg her for forgiveness. You must find Ya and bring her back!” Grandma Su remarked firmly.

“Yes, I understand,” Su Zhan replied.

“I was this close to getting grandchildren of my own... Once I see you two get back together and have a child, I’ll be able to die with no regrets...”

“You’ll live a very long life, Grandma.” Su Zhan held her hand. “Don’t worry; I’ll make sure to bring Ya back with me. We’ll give you so many grandchildren to look after, so you better get well soon!”

Grandma Su chuckled. Su Zhan’s phone began ringing in his pocket, and he answered it when he saw Shen Peichuan’s number on the screen.

“Hello, Peichuan. What’s up?”

“Got time for a drink with me?”

Su Zhan could tell that the man sounded depressed and asked, “What happened?”

“Stop asking so many questions and just come join me if you’re free.”

Su Zhan took another look at the caller ID and saw that it was indeed Shen Peichuan. *What’s gotten into this guy? Why is he in such a bad mood?*

“Yeah, I’m free now. Where are you?” Su Zhan asked.

“The usual bar.”

“All right, see you there.” Su Zhan hung up the phone and turned towards his grandmother. “It’s Peichuan. He seems to be in a bad mood and wants me to have a drink with him.”

Grandma Su sighed. “Does Peichuan not have a girlfriend yet?”

“Mhmm.”

“Geez, you kids are so worrisome. You should all be having stable relationships by now!”

Su Zhan patted her hand gently and said, “I know, don’t worry, Grandma. I’ll be on my way now.”

Grandma Su waved at him. “Go on, then. Alcohol is bad for your health, so don’t drink so much of it. That goes for both of you, got it?”

“Got it! Rest well, Grandma!” Su Zhan grabbed his car keys and told his maid, “Take good care of my grandma.”

“Yes, sir.”

Su Zhan then drove towards the bar he and Shen Peichuan used to frequent and found the latter already drunk by the time he got there.

“Something on your mind?” Su Zhan grabbed the bottle and poured himself a glass.

“No... I’m just in a bad mood, that’s all.” Shen Peichuan uttered.

Naturally, Su Zhan didn’t believe him. “It’s unlike you to go drinking whenever you’re in bad mood. Come on, tell me all about it. What happened?”

Shen Peichuan began pouring another glass and looked his friend in the eye.
“Just shut up and drink with me, okay?”

“Heh...” Su Zhan chuckled to himself. *It’s obvious that something is bothering him a lot from his tone of voice.*

“Let me guess; you got into a fight with that little girlfriend of yours?”